

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY, 25 MARCH 2010** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

**Present:** Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mr. A. Gomme  
Mr. S. Henton  
Mrs. M. Hersey  
Mr. M. Leach  
Mrs. M. Nicolle (Vice Chairman)  
Mr. R. Pickett (from 8.10 p.m.)  
Mr. C. Snowling  
Mrs. V. Upton  
Mr. S. Willcox

**Also Present:** Councillor Mrs. C. Field (WSCC)  
Sergeant R. Mundy (Sussex Police) (to the end of Minute 375)  
3 members of the public

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin

The Meeting began at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedures for the King Edward Hall.

### **373. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

373.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Davies and Councillor Pickett had sent apologies for late arrival due to a business commitment. The reasons for absence were accepted.

### **374. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA.**

374.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any item on the Agenda.

### **375. POLICE PRIORITIES – Sergeant Rachel Mundy**

375.1 The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Rachel Mundy who was attending the meeting instead of PC Geoff Bennett, who was on a course. Sgt. Mundy listed the current main priorities: speeding, crime prevention and supporting local events.

The new Inspector would be attending the next meeting of the Police Neighbourhood Panel and would be making more defined priorities.

Speed Indication Devices were available and Parish Councils could nominate roads to target.

The Police had carried out an exercise at the Summerhill Lane/West Common junction as there had been reports of cars jumping the lights. Offenders were pulled over into Greenways and ten fixed penalty notices had been issued, four of which had incurred loss of points.

PC Bennett and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) Clough and Arnold were promoting Farm Watch which was proving effective in tracking suspicious vehicles etc. Neighbourhood Officers were supporting school fairs and fetes. The Police and Fire Brigade had indicated that they would like a stand at Village Day.

Other than minor damage caused by parking on verges, Lindfield was relatively quiet.

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The Chairman stated that it was good to see PC Bennett and PCSOs Clough and Arnold walking about the Village. Councillor Allen added that he attended the regular meetings with the Police organised by the PCSOs which were worthwhile and the updates provided were very useful. Residents generally felt that they could approach PC Bennett and his surgery provided a good opportunity to make his availability and presence in the Village known. Councillor Allen expressed thanks on behalf of the community.

Sgt Mundy stated that PCSO Anika Arnold would eventually be taking over from PCSO Clough and she would be dedicated to Lindfield.

There were no questions from members of the public for Sgt Mundy and she left the meeting.

### 376. QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 376.1 Lindfield Common. Mr. N. Kerslake stated that the Cricket Club's application to the Secretary of State for permission to implement the planning permission for the pavilion extension and the cricket nets was very important for the Village and for this Council. The response to the Planning Inspector to be decided at this meeting would send a clear message to Mid Sussex District Council as to how Lindfield Parish Council wanted the Common managed. Mr. Kerslake was not against sport but felt that the law relating to management of the Common, under the Scheme of Management and the Commons Act 2006, must be upheld, to protect the right for the general public to roam freely on the Common. Too much development had already been allowed and the latest application would result in continuous development along the southern boundary.

### 377. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2010

- 377.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 21 January 2010. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

### 378. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

- 378.1 Retirement of Haywards Heath Town Clerk. The Chairman referred to Carole Preston's retirement as the end of an era: she had always had the best interest of Haywards Heath at heart and she would be missed. A card was to be sent to Mrs. Preston from the Parish Council.

### 379. ACTION LIST

- 379.1 There was little to report as most of actions were taken up by the Committees. It was noted that there was a consultation on the review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) due to be published early in the Summer. This would be on the Planning and Traffic Committee's Agenda at the next meeting. Councillor Snowling stated that a meeting would be arranged fairly soon with Lindfield Rural Parish Council and the Lindfield Preservation Society; Lindfield Parish Council would be represented by Councillors Blunden, Snowling and Gomme.

### 380. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS.

**Councillor Mrs. Field (WSCC) reported as follows:**

- 380.1 Oathall Community College playing pitch and floodlights. This application had been approved by a vote of 9:2 with the condition that a Community Use Agreement for use of the facilities out of school hours should be drawn up. However there had followed a disagreement as to how Planning Officers would engage residents in this process, exacerbated by interpretation of the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting, which Cllr. Field had not yet seen. The usual procedure was for the agreement to be negotiated by WSCC Officers and the School Governors and then monitored by a group with representatives of residents to assess the impact on the neighbours. The agreement would then be

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reviewed after a year to determine whether the impact was tolerable. At this stage variation of the conditions could be made. Residents would therefore only be involved after the agreement had been negotiated.

- 380.2 Newton Road development. Cllr. Field had received a number of emails about the damage to verges caused by construction vehicles. Barratts were to apply for a licence for a temporary period to allow them to carry out repairs but they had not yet returned the application form. Vulnerable areas would be temporarily reinforced with hard surfacing to protect them. The sooner the application form was returned, the sooner WSCC could deal with it. The road signage put up by Barratts had been the wrong colour and therefore did not comply with the legal requirements for signs on the highway.
- 380.3 School admissions. Cllr. Field reported that at the end of this year's admissions process, a very large number of children needed primary school places in this area. Blackthorns School was full and in order to accommodate as many reception children as wanted places, Lindfield Primary School was to take 75 children instead of 60, for whom a mobile classroom would be provided. This would be an emotive subject because when the school was redeveloped ten years ago, the end of temporary classrooms had been a particular benefit. A letter to those affected had given details of the person at WSCC to contact, in order to shield the Head Teacher. Cllr. Field stated that current population trends indicated a steady increase in demand for school places generally and she felt that the effect of the Newton Road development on school admissions had not been taken into account in WSCC's future plans
- 380.4 Snow Summit. Cllr. Field had attended the Snow Summit held by WSCC on 11 March, which had been very well attended by representatives of numerous agencies and organisations. It had been recognised that valuable lessons had to be learnt about dealing with severe weather events. A report was to be published in due course.
- 380.5 Budget implications. There had been no indication yet as to how the £100,000,000 from the Government for road repairs would be allocated. WSCC would be taking over the administration of Concessionary Fares but the method for future funding had not been clarified. Less money was to be restricted by "ring fencing" which would allow more freedom to decide how funds should be spent. There was to be a cap on the employers contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- 380.6 Central Mid Sussex County Local Committee. The next meeting was to take place on 14 April at Queen's Hall, Cuckfield.
- 380.7 Councillor Allen stated that he had not been aware of the report on school admissions prior to Councillor Field's report and had therefore been unable to declare his personal interest as a Governor of Lindfield Primary School beforehand. He thanked Cllr. Field on behalf of the Schools for her constant interest and input.

### **Councillor Snowling (MSDC) reported as follows**

- 380.8 Lindfield Common / Cricket Club. Councillor Snowling expressed his intention of introducing Item 13 on the Agenda and leaving it to other members to debate.
- 380.9 Snow. Councillor Snowling stated that the report of the meeting of the Emergency Planning Liaison Group held on 8 January would be received by the Better Services Advisory Group on 13 April.

### **381. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS RECEIVED.**

- 381.1 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – noted that this would be on the Agenda for the next meeting of Planning and Traffic Committee.
- 381.2 Mid Sussex District Council's Parking Strategy Review – response due by 31 March. Cllr. Nicolle asked Members to feed in any comments and the Clerk was asked to re-circulate the consultation document by email.

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### 382. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:

- 382.1 Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 March. In the absence of Councillor Davies, Councillor Willcox gave the report.
- 382.2 Grants and donations. **NOTED:** the Committee had agreed to make a second donation to Streetmate during the current financial year, making a total of £550 to that organisation. Members had decided that this could be justified because the previous application had arrived just too late to be considered in 2008/09 so no donation was made that year. It was to be made clear that this was an exception.
- 382.3 Grants and Donations Policy . The Committee had considered a suggestion to amend the Grants and Donations Policy so that two batches of requests would be considered per year and organisations would be contacted to invite them to apply. However, the reasons stated in the existing policy for not taking the “beauty parade” approach had been considered still to be valid. The present system allowed organisations to apply at any time of the year according to need. The alternative would also involve more administration and might go against equality and diversity if any organisations were left off the circulation list. It would also limit organisations by requiring applications to be submitted at specific times rather than as the need arose. It had therefore been agreed not to change the Policy and to continue to consider grants as they were submitted. However it had been agreed that the availability of grant funding should be advertised in the Council’s Newsletter at suitable points in the year.
- 382.4 Report of Internal Auditor. **NOTED:** three relatively minor points in the Internal Auditors’ report recorded in the F&GP Minutes relating to: tax on staff mileage allowance; upper limit on VAT claims for repayment and copies of Contractors Insurance Cover and Health and Safety policies - these were being followed up.
- 382.5 Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee: report on review of insurance and risk management and update on the draft emergency plan. The F&GP Committee had agreed to get additional quotations for insurance cover which would go before the Sub Committee on 28 April and then to F&GP on 20 May in time for the renewal date of 27 May. The Emergency Plan was being moved forward - it had been discussed at the Sub Committee meeting and the draft was being now simplified to suit local circumstances. The model the draft had been based on was for a group of villages around Hurstpierpoint and the contact procedure in particular was found to be more complex than was needed for Lindfield.
- 382.6 Communications Forum: to consider recommendations regarding the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book. The Communications Forum had recommended a consultation to review the publication of the Directory, involving both Parish Councils, the Preservation Society, the schools and churches and other organisations. F&GP had recognised that this involved considerable effort and some cost and it had therefore been agreed to review the feedback from the letter the Communications Forum Secretary had published in Lindfield Life before taking further action. The Forum had also recommended that both Parish Councils raise this matter at their respective Parish Meetings. Meanwhile the Clerk had written to eight printers in addition to GC Publishing (the usual printers), asking for quotations. The Managing Director of GC Publishing, Phillip Moore, had visited the Parish Office that afternoon to offer suggestions and had left a selection of sample products. One suggestion he had made was that GC Publishing could take over the administration of the advertising, which was a time consuming task, and keep the income but supply the diaries free of charge. They would stand the loss and if there was a surplus they could agree to share the revenue. They would honour the current rates for existing advertisers and mark them up by the RPI thereafter but they would set the prices for new advertisers. Their local agent was based in Crawley Down. Mr. Moore had taken a Lindfield Leaflet and was going to use it to prepare a sample cover bearing a picture of the Pond.

F&GP would consider the proposals and quotations at the meeting on 20 May.

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382.7 To receive the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18 March 2010. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18 March 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

382.8 Statements of Account/Budget Progress and Bank Reconciliation for the periods 01.01.10 to 28.02.10 . **RESOLVED:** to approve the statements of account / budget progress and bank reconciliation for the periods 01.01.10 to 31.01.19 and 01.02.10 to 28.02.10.

382.9 List of cheques for approval. The list of cheques for approval was tabled and noted.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:

Mr. J. M. Higgins	Electricity, Christmas Lights	40.00
Ms. A. M. Carter	Electricity, Christmas Lights	70.00
Mrs. P. E. Blake	Electricity, Christmas Lights	30.00
Mr. B. D. Henry	Electricity, Christmas Lights	60.00
Rev. C. Martin	Electricity, Christmas Lights	40.00
Dark Star Brewery	Electricity, Christmas Lights	10.00
Pearless de Rougemont & Co (for the estate of Lady Beeching)	Electricity, Christmas Lights	40.00
S. J. Wiggins and Son	Disconnect Christmas Lights	180.34
4Sight	Donation	100.00
Holiday @ Home	Donation	200.00
Streetmate	Donation	250.00
Total S137 expenditure		£1,020.34

**RESOLVED** to approve the list of cheques (numbered 104404 to 104467 inclusive) for the period 22 January 2010 to 25 March 2010, totalling £23,567.01. **NOTED** that the Petty Cash, as at 25 March 2010 had a balance of £133.89 had been made under Section 137.

The Chairman signed the list of cheques which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Appendix A.

**383. ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

383.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee held on 4 February 2010. Councillor Blunden reported as follows:

383.2 Christmas Festival Night and Christmas Lights (Minute 322). The Committee had agreed a number of recommendations made by the Working Group. Christmas Festival Night was to be held on Tuesday 7 December this year and the Parish Office would not open to the public that afternoon. Portable floodlights were to be purchased, to be clamped to trees to provide extra light for stalls as the hired floodlights were not very suitable as there were few places these could safely be located. The Working Group would be looking into pea lighting for the Pond island and some way of lighting the snowman sign. It had been suggested that the King Edward Hall should be booked as an operational centre and rendezvous point for the night, but on enquiry it had been found that the Hall was fully booked that night.

383.3 To receive the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 4 February 2010. **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 4 February 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

383.4 Allotments – Meeting with Tenants. Councillor Blunden also reported that a very useful meeting of the Allotment Tenants with members of the Allotments Working Group had taken place the previous week.

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This annual meeting provided an opportunity to remind tenants of their obligations, particularly with regard to health and safety matters and for them to raise any points or concerns. Issues raised by tenants included: a request for an extra water tap; a request for a hardstanding for the manure deposit area; the condition of certain trees; mowing of paths and a request for names and phone numbers of other plot holders to be put up in the mower shed, which was turned down for Data Protection reasons. The issues raised would be taken to the next meeting of the Committee for appropriate action. A number of people had offered to help with putting up the chestnut fencing and weeding the area around the new hedge. The notes of the meeting would be sent out with the tenancy renewals as soon as possible after Easter.

### **384. PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE.**

384.1 To receive the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 19 January, 8 February and 2 March 2010. It was noted that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March were not yet available and these would be received at the next Council meeting. Councillor Snowling had nothing specific to report from any of these meetings. **RESOLVED:** that that the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meetings held on 19 January, 8 February and 2 March 2010 be received and their recommendations confirmed.

### **385. TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE REGARDING THE LINDFIELD CRICKET CLUB'S APPLICATION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE (DEFRA) FOR CONSENT WORKS ON LINDFIELD COMMON UNDER SECTION 38 OF THE COMMONS ACT 2006.**

385.1 Following the grant of planning permission by MSDC for the proposed extension to the Cricket Pavilion and for cricket nets, the Lindfield Cricket Club had been required to apply for permission for these works under other legislation – the Scheme of Management under the Commons Act 1899 and the Commons Act 2006 which stipulated that restricted works on Common land may not be carried out without the consent of the appropriate national authority. An application had therefore been made to the Secretary of State (DEFRA) which had been delegated to the Planning Inspector for determination. The Parish Council had been invited to submit comments on the proposal.

385.2 Councillor Snowling reported on the meeting of the full Mid Sussex District Council the previous evening at which Members considered “a request from Lindfield Cricket Club for the consents required from the Council, as statutory managers of Lindfield Common under the Scheme of Management made on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1900, to carry out the works described in the Club’s application to the Planning Inspectorate under Section 38 of the Commons Act 2006, as authorised by the Local Planning Authority under applications LF/05/00120/FUL and 09/02579/FUL.” This had been the first time that MSDC as owners and managers of the Common, in Full Council and in open session, had had to consider whether to allow such development to take place. At that meeting the Council had not been exercising any sort of planning function, but acting as owners of the land in question. The report prepared by Officers had recommended that permission should be granted and set out the process for granting the lease. Councillors Hersey and Snowling had spoken against these recommendations for the sake of safeguarding the Common, because the proposals would deny the general public access to part of the Common. Most Members who had subsequently spoken had been sympathetic to the views they had put forward. After debate, the Officers’ recommendation that consent should be granted was rejected by 24 votes to 7 with 6 abstentions.

385.3 Councillor Snowling reminded Members that the discussions at this Parish Council meeting were unrelated to the planning issues and Members of the Planning and Traffic Committee who had previously considered the planning applications for this work could not be accused of preconception. It was also noted that the planning permission for the pavilion extension granted in 2006 had now expired and a fresh application would have to be submitted on which the Parish Council would be invited to comment, as statutory consultee. It was open to the Parish Council to choose to accept that the District Council’s refusal to give consent, as landowner, might put an end to the negotiations, or to offer an opinion as if the issue was still open. **Councillors Snowling and Hersey then indicated that they would**

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not take part in any discussion of the matter or vote on the item. [*amendment agreed at Full Council 13.05.10*]

- 385.4 The Chairman stated that the Parish Council was faced with the decision whether or not to agree with the District Council's decision in whole or to offer separate comments on the pavilion extension and the cricket nets. The Planning and Traffic Committee had agreed that the pavilion proposals had been acceptable but had objected to the nets as representing too much encroachment on the Common. Members had felt that there should not be permanent cricket nets which would impede access and be a visible feature on the Common all year round.
- 385.5 The Chairman invited Members to comment and concerns were expressed about the encroachment that would result from these proposals: the nets would block free access of the Common from beyond the end of the cricket pavilion to the tennis courts. The cricket club did not serve the whole community whereas the Common was for the benefit of all. The importance of preserving public open space was also referred to in Planning Policy Guidance 17, as well as the Scheme of Management and the 2006 Commons Act. PPG17 advised Councils "to be cautious about the development of public open spaces because creeping development and incremental loss of open space can erode the quality of the public open space".
- 385.6 Comments were also made about the fact that a substantial area of Common [the cricket square] was currently enclosed by temporary wooden fencing. It was suggested that, as the cricket club spoke not just for their own interests but for the wider sporting area of the Village, working together with other sporting groups would be a good thing.
- 385.7 It was unanimously **AGREED** to support Mid Sussex District Council's decision, as owners and managers under the Scheme of Management for the Common, to refuse consent for the works proposed by Lindfield Cricket Club to be carried out.
- 386. TO CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 21 APRIL 2010.**
- 386.1 Items for the Agenda were to include emergency planning for severe weather and, as recommended by the Communications Forum, the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book. Members were asked to forward any other suggestions to the Clerk. It was **AGREED** that wine would be offered after the meeting.
- 387. NOTICE OF MOTION RECEIVED PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12 (A).**
- 387.1 The following notice of motion had been received by the Clerk from Councillors Blunden, Allen, Leach, Nicolle, Upton and Willcox:
- "The Parish Council should revisit the resolution made at the Full Council meeting held on 21 January 2010 (Confidential Minute 372.1) as there was insufficient debate on this decision and no consideration given to the wider issues that would result from not proceeding with renting Denmans Court".
- This Motion was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED**.
- 387.2 As the discussion at Minute 372.1 had taken place in confidential session, this item was now deferred to the end of the meeting, and would follow a resolution to exclude the public [and press].
- 388. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, ARISING AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. ANY SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTING OR REFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.**

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- 388.1 MSALC / MSDC Annual Conference. Members were reminded that the Annual Conference was due to take place at Clair Hall on Friday 9 April. Councillors Blunden and Nicolle would be attending and other Members were asked to let the Clerk know if they wished to attend.

This part of the meeting ended at 8.40 p.m. There followed a second period for questions / comments from members of the public.

Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book. Mr. N. Kerslake commented on the risks of the alternative solution proposed by GC Publishing.

Oathall Community College Sports Pitch. Mr. N. Kerslake supported the involvement of residents in drawing up the operating agreement for community use of the facility.

School Admissions – Lindfield Primary School. Mr. N. Kerslake expressed concern regarding the two and a half class intake and its ongoing effect. He was surprised that this had not been managed better.

Resolution to revisit the decision regarding Denmans Court. Mr. N. Kerslake was surprised at this decision, as the discussions had been going on for many months and he wondered what wider issues had not been discussed.

The confidential part of the meeting began at 8.50 p.m.

389. As reported at Minute 387.2, the following item had been deferred to the closed session due to the commercial sensitivity of the matter to be discussed. There were also two further matters relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme which it was agreed should be discussed in the confidential part of the meeting. The Chairman therefore moved under Standing Order No. 35 (a) "that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw". This was **AGREED**.

390. **TO CONSIDER AND AGREE WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL SHOULD CONTINUE WITH NEGOTIATIONS FOR ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION AT DENMANS COURT**

- 390.1 Following re-consideration of the decision made at the meeting held on 21 January 2010 to withdraw from the negotiations relating to the lease for Denmans Court, it was **AGREED** that the Council should re-open the negotiations with the Landlord, aiming to agree all formalities by 30 April 2010. It was also **AGREED** that the Clerk be authorised to bring the matter to a conclusion, in consultation with Councillors Snowling, Willcox and Blunden.

391. **STAFFING**

- 391.1 Local Government Pension Scheme **NOTED:** the Confidential Minutes of the F&GP Meeting held on 18 March 2010 relating to an issue regarding an individual's contributions and a matter regarding the fund administration.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 p.m.